21% and 24% cases were disposed of between 90-150 days by the district for a and State Commissions respectively.

(d) and (e) No. Sir. The proposals for the Amendment of the Consumer protection Act, 1986 as recommended by the Working Group constituted in 1994 and subsequently by an Expert Group in 1997 are under consideration of the Government.

Government Directive to Purchase Paddy and Wheat from Farmers

1442. SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to direct the Food Corporation of India to purchase paddy and wheat direct from the farmers; and

(b) if not, why such a proposal cannot be considered to break the monopoly of the Millers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) Food Corporation of India procure paddy and wheat for Central Pool directly from the farmers in the allotted mandis/purchase centres in the concerned States/UTs except in Punjab and Haryana where FCI State procuring agencies purchase foodgrains through Katcha Arhtias (licensed Commission Agents) as per the Punjab Haryana Agricultural produce Marketing Act. The Katcha Arhtias provide necessary services to the farmers and buyers. Stocks are sold through auction, and FCI/State agencies make the purchases at the declared procurement price by participating in the bidding.

The farmers are free to sell their produce to FCI/State agencies at the MSP/ procurement price or to private traders/ millers as is advantageous to them.

Non-Availability of Packing Material for Apples

1443. SHRIMATI JAYAPARDA NAHATA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether non-availability of packing material is leading to rotting of fruit (Apple) worth crores of rupees in Kashmir and in other Apple Producing areas; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to save fruit growers from huge losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) The Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture & Cooperation) has informed that it has not received any report from the State Governments regarding rotting of fruits like apples due to non-availability of packing material.

(b) Does not arise in view of the reply to part (a) above. However, the National Horticulture Board implements a scheme entitled Integrated Project on Management of Post-Harvest Infrastructure of Horticultural Crops under which assistance is provided in the form of subsidy on merit for improved packaging to minimise post-harvest losses.

तलहन पेराई उद्योग

1444.**श्री कपिल सिब्बल:**
श्री बलवंत सिंह रामूवालिया:

क्या खाद्य और उपभोक्ता मामले मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि देश में तिलहन पेराई उद्योग विश्व का सबसे बड़ा पेराई उद्योग है;

(ख) यदि नहीं, तो इस संबंध में तथ्य क्या हैं और मार्च, 1998 के अंत में तिलहन पेराई की कुल अधिष्ठापित क्षमता कितनी थी;

(ग) क्या यह भी सच है कि कुल अधिष्ठापित क्षमता का पूरी तरह उपयोग नहीं किया जा रहा है;